

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MELBOU 01965 190645Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3616

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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FROM CIVAIRDEL

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR, AS, NZ

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA CIVAIR OFFICIALS

1. IT WAS APPARENT THAT ONLY A VISIT TO CANBERRA BY CIVAIR DEL COULD CLARIFY ISSUES WHICH HAD BECOME CLOUDED THROUGH EARLIER COMMUNICATIONS. THEREFORE, GROUP FLEW TO CANBERRA ON OCT 15 TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS FOLLOWED BY DAY SESSION WITH GOA CIVAIR OFFICIALS. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION FOR GROUP'S VISIT AT END OF MEETING. GOADEL WAS HEADED BY TAPLIN, INCLUDED CHAPMAN AND SCOTT OF MELBOURNE ATG AS WELL AS COOPER OF QANTAS. HALTON JOINED GROUP ONLY FOR LUNCH.

2. USDEL EMPHASIZED UNOFFICIAL, INFORMAL NATURE OF VISIT AND THEN JUSTIFIED PAA'S SP SUBMISSION WHEN FACED WITH LOW KEY GOA QUESTIONING. GOA'S ONLY DETERMINED EFFORT WAS ATTEMPT TO HAVE SP PROGRAM LABELLED EXPERIMENTAL AND TO LIMIT PERIOD TO 3 MONTHS. BOTH FAILED.

3. ON ARRIVAL IN MELBOURNE USDEL HAS BEEN ADVISED THAT RUMOR HAD REACHED HALTON TO EFFECT THAT USDEL WAS IN AUSTRALIA TO SOUND OUT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A SECOND US CARRIER, AND THAT THIS RUMOR WAS MOTIVATING

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PAGE 02 MELBOU 01965 190645Z

HALTON TO REQUEST USDEL VISIT TO CANBERRA. USDEL MEMBER

JOHNSON STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY RUMOR WAS TOTALLY FALSE, THAT USDEL HAD NO SUCH INTENTION, THAT CAB RULES PREVENTED ANY SUCH DISCUSSION WHILE THE SOUTH PACIFIC CASE WAS BEFORE THE BOARD, AND THAT JOHNSON WOULD NOT AND COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY DISCUSSION. JOHNSON FURTHER STATED THAT THE BOARD WAS FULLY AWARE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POSITION AS EXPRESSED THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS AND THAT UNDER RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED PROCEDURES BOARD DECISION WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC WELL BEFORE FINAL PRESIDENTIAL DECISION AND OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO MAKE ANY FURTHER STATEMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE SHOULD THAT GOVERNMENT DEEM IT NECESSARY AFTER ISSUANCE OF THE BOARD'S DECISION. AUSDEL ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF RUMOR, BUT STATED IN VIEW OF JOHNSON'S POSITION THAT IT WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE MATTER, BUT THAT IT WAS SATISFIED WITH THE PROCEDURAL INFORMATION STATED ABOVE. SIMILAR POINTS MADE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH HALTON AT LUNCH.

4. USDEL ALSO BROUGHT UP QUESTION OF USER CHARGES AND MADE POINTS REFERRED TO IN STATE 250768. GOA SYMPATHIZED WITH OUR RATIONALE AND PRIVATELY OFFERED VIEW THAT CIVAIR STAFF AWARE OF SHORTCOMINGS AND FACT SOME OF THE PROGRAM BASED ON MISCONCEPTIONS LEADING IT TO ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT TO FAVORABLY AMEND PRESENT LEGISLATION OR PROVIDE EQUITABLE SOLUTION.

5. USDEL ALSO QUESTIONED GOA ON TRANS TASMAN TRAFFIC AND FOUND STRONG SUPPORT FOR US POSITION. IN FACT GOA SUGGESTED FINDING SOLUTIONS TO ANZ 6TH FREEDOM TRAFFIC AND INTERCHANGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PROPOSING DIFFERENTIAL FARES AS ONE MEANS AND ALSO FAVORED ELIMINATION OF INTERCHANGE, USDEL ASKED FOR INFORMAL WRITTEN PROPOSALS TO REVIEW POSSIBILITY.

6. SESSION WAS RELAXED AND INFORMAL AND EACH SIDE FELT IT TO BE WORTHWHILE. GOA REGRETTED INCONVENIENCES TO DEL SCHEDULE BUT GRATIFIED BY VISIT AND APPRECIATED FRANK INTERCHANGE. VISIT TURNED OUT TO BE A CASE OF "ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL."
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